20 Great After School Ideas on a Shoestring Budget
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Hawarden Public Library
Go From After School Boredom to After School Cool!

We used to offer 2 Lego programs each month, one for K-2nd, and one for 3rd-5th. We averaged 10-15 kids at each program.

Early out Fridays (once per month) we would show a movie. We averaged 10-12 kids, who would never sit through a whole kids movie.

Kids were not allowed to use computers in the library until Spring 2017.

In September 2017 we began offering Lego programs weekly, open to all youth. Average attendance was 10-15 kids.

In September 2018 we began offering more variety in our programming, which we will share today!
1. Galaxy Painting

Tempera or Acrylic Paint

Water

Spray Bottles

Poster Board

Instructions: Mix Water & Paint in Spray Bottles, Spray on Poster Board. Great Outside Activity!
2. Snow Painting

Food Coloring

Water

Squeeze Bottles

SNOW!

Instructions: Mix Food coloring (about 10-12 drops, per 8 oz squeeze bottle) with water. Set the kids loose outside, and create masterpieces!
3. Bad Art Week

Any Craft supplies located in your closets, stash, etc.

Poster Board

Pull out those old leftover craft supplies you have no idea what to do with (we all know we have them!)

Let the kids make something silly, fun, or completely outrageous!
4. Chalk the Walks

Sidewalk Chalk

A Nice Day!

This is easy, take the kids outside, and let them decorate your sidewalks. They can create large life size creations, and take pictures.
5. School Pride Party

Paint in School colors (tempera works great)

Poster Board

Instructions: We made cutouts of our school letters (W & S for West Sioux). Kids got to paint and decorate for Homecoming! You could do almost anything in school colors.
6. Decorate Your Own Bookmarks

Bookmarks in Cardstock
Markers, Rubber Stamps

Bring out coloring supplies and bookmarks, and let them create awesome ones. We purchased blank bookmarks at Hobby Lobby, but you could cut your own.
7. Create Your Own Buttons

Button Maker (we recognize this is equipment not all have, but the investment is worth it.). We Recommend American Button Machines

Paper

Markers, rubber stamps

Have paper circles cut and ready (it also helps to have shading where the wraparound is)

Let the kids design their own buttons.
Kids

Library Books

Helpful Adults

Kids can come and read with library or programming staff.

This has been a weekly staple, and while attendance is smaller, it has been steady, and is popular.
9. Scavenger Hunts

Clues

Kids

Library

This is a simple low-cost activity that gets kids exploring the library and finding resources. Can be adapted for any age.
10. Gaming

Board Games

Video Game Systems & Games (Borrow from Friends)

Let the kids try different things.

Gather games from donations or borrow them!
11. Partner With Extension Office

No Cost

See if they can come on a regular basis (like once a month).

They bring STEM programming and all supplies!
Visit: https://kids.guinnessworldrecords.com/activities

Find some fun World Records

Let Kids Try to beat them!
13. Minute to Win It

The possibilities are endless, and supplies can often be found in the library!

Kids love competition
14. Musical Instrument Petting Zoo

Invite the Band Instructor to bring Instruments.

Allow kids to learn about them, touch them, and if permitted try them!
Mason Jar Science by Jonathan Adolph

Some took very common and simple items.

Fun for Kids!
16. Lego Building Challenges

Transform your Lego program with building challenges, or stop motion animation
17. Video Creation

Allow kids to do a news show, or the weather.

If you have a green screen, have some fun with it.

Turn a hit song into one about the library.

All you need is a phone or iPad and willing participants!
18. County Naturalist

Ask Your County Conservation Dept. or Naturalist to come for a program.

They can sometimes bring animals or other learning opportunities.

Free!
Hula Hoops, drawn circles, squares

Kids separate into two teams, each tries to reach the other end by winning Rock, Paper, Scissors when they meet, winner advances.
20. Stuffed Animal Sleepover/Saturday Morning Cartoons

Start with drop-off after school on Friday, let the kids drop off their friends for the night, hold a Saturday morning program for them to pick up.

Great Fun!
What are some of your Favorite After-School programs?

Share with us!
Thank You!

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